

This is a printer friendly version of an article from the **Marshfield News-Herald**

[Back](#)

Behind the scenes, it's all work for musicians

By **Adam Rodewald**

Marshfield News-Herald August 14, 2007

The glamour is gone, but they can't get the itch out of their blood.

Playing in a band is a labor of love, really, more than a road to thrills, fame and money.

"The thing that the crowd is not aware of is the enormous amount of time that goes into (a gig)," explains Donnie Keiffer while rocking on his keyboard bench, clip-on shades flipped up on his glasses.

Donnie, 70, should know. He's played music his whole life and has gained the reputation as a legend among musicians.

"They have no concept at all of the time and investment," he says, then gives a hearty laugh. "We sure aren't in it for the money."

Countless hours of practicing aside, preparation for a gig starts first thing in the morning.

"You have to set the tone for the day because you know you're going to need that energy later in the day," says 57-year-old bass guitar hero Wayne Jellish.

By 5:30 p.m., they're loading a trailer full of equipment just to make it to the venue by 7 p.m. when they rush to set up before a four hour performance at 9 p.m. After all that, everything must still be taken down, re-loaded and brought home.

And that's just for a gig in town.

Even for solo artist Elijah Blair, 25, there's more behind the scenes work than actual performing at a gig.

"Unless you're in it, you don't realize how much work it really is. I think people have the misconception that musicians just show up, play, party all night and wake up the next morning, making there living off an hour or two of work," he says.

The worst part, in Elijah's opinion, is waiting for his turn on stage.

"I think it's the anticipation of getting up there and wondering how it's going to go," he says. "The reality is you're putting yourself on trial, letting all these people you don't know judge not just your music but who you are because a lot of songs are personal."

Advertisement

More information on the web

 [Link to live recordings of Elijah Blair and BackTrax band](#)

Coming tomorrow

Elijah Blair and the BackTrax Band discuss how they build a fan base in an area with a small music scene.

For Don Kerper, guitar player for the BackTrax Band, there comes a point before every show where he heads to the bar for a shot "to separate all the work from when we're going to play. It's a point of separation where you say, 'I'm done being the set-up man.'"

And that is the moment where a musicians soul takes over.

"There are some nights when you're in the zone. When you're in the zone, when you're doing a solo, it can be as good as anything you find in life, including sex," says Keiffer.